

Mental Health for Victims of Trafficking

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Introduction Human trafficking is a worldwide problem, that deeply affects the lives of those involved. Victims of trafficking are confronted with a broad range of problems (unsafety, social isolation, financial problems, legal insecurities, stigmatization). Poor mental health is a dominant and persistent adverse health effect associated with human trafficking.

Objectives: The (Mental) Health needs of victims have received limited attention, particularly when compared with law- enforcement and immigration responses to trafficking (WHO, 2012). Collaboration between the Justice- , welfare- and Mental Healthcare system is needed to develop solutions that can lead to a breakthrough to improve the Mental health and overall wellbeing of these women. The Centre against child and humantrafficking (CKM, the Netherlands:www.ckm-fier.nl) integrates the services needed by offering a safehouse setting combined with an inpatient MHTreatment facility. The centre closely collaborates with the justice system to be able to advocate the needs and legal rights not only on an individual, but also on a group level. The centre aims to improve the MH and overall wellbeing of the women (and children) admitted to the centre.

Results All women admitted to the centre have severe MH problems (often untreated before admission), mainly caused by a complex, chronic PTSS. The severe sleeping problems caused by the PTSS are experienced as most disabling for daily functioning. A sudden increase in MH problems is often related to legal insecurities and trials against the perpetrators.

Conclusions More research is needed to identify the MH needs of the women to be able to improve the MH services needed for this group. The population of the CKM offers great oppurtunities to develop treatment modules for the victims of trafficking.